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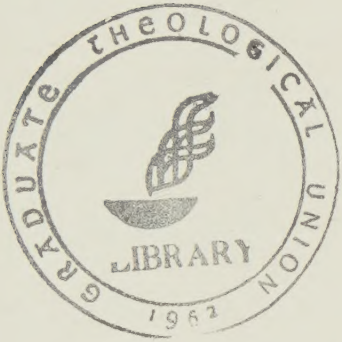
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"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names."
—Rig Veda

VEDANTA QUARTERLY

Message of the East

SPRING 1957

INNER CONSCIOUSNESS

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Volume XLVI Number 1

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

VOLUME XLVI 1957 NUMBER 1

A PRAYER

O Supreme Spirit, One without a second,
Thou art nameless, formless, infinite,
indivisible, absolute.
We call Thee by various names;
seek Thee through many paths,
And Thy manifestation is in all—
minute and vast.
We pray Thou dost release us
from the dungeon of self,
And set us free in the spaciousness
of Thy holy spirit.
Help us to partake of Thee,
Who dost ever dwell within our heart.
May we learn to love and never hate.
Be thou immanent in the hour of communion
That our spirit may become fixed in Thee
and emanate Thy holiness.
Thou art our unfailing joy.
Grant that we may live joyously from day to day,
drawing our strength from Thee
To meet each problem and to perform each task.
Thy peace is our supreme blessing.
Bestow upon all Thy children peace.
Peace be unto us and to all living beings.

KINSHIP OF IDEALS

Even if the most wicked worships Me with undivided devotion he should be regarded as good for he is rightly resolved. Very soon he becomes a righteous soul and attains to eternal peace. Know thou, O son of Kunti, that My devotee never perishes.

—Bhagavad-Gita

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

—Psalms

How could man live at all if he did not give absolution every night to himself and to all his brothers?

—Goethe

Let no one deceive another, let no one despise another, let no one out of anger or resentment wish to harm another. *—Buddha*

One who spends his time in discussing the good and bad qualities of others simply wastes his own time. For it is time spent neither in thinking about his own self nor about the Supreme Self, but ineffectually thinking of others' selves. *—Sri Ramakrishna*

The sinner of today is the saint of tomorrow; therefore, unmindful of the sins and shortcomings of our neighbors, let us look to our own imperfections, surely forgetting what God has forgotten: sins truly repented, which God has forgotten, are no business of ours to remember. *—Meister Eckhart*

It is the glory of the saint to spend himself for those in need and to undertake the task of shepherding them into Paradise. Again, it is the mark of saintship to show compassion to all God's servants and to fight for them against the forces of evil. *—Sufi Mystic*

INNER CONCIOUSNESS

by Swami Paramananda

Hush! This is the hour of silence
When soul seeks its refreshment.
Turbulent mind, thou art ever restive
for sport and gain;
Thou art ever mad for new sensation
and art in feverish plight.

Wouldst thou rob me of my true
happiness?
Be still, that thou mayest not miss
this new and blessed joy.

How sweet is the sound of silence!
How tender is its touch!
How fragrant is its breathing!
How lovely is its form!
O be still yet while that my soul may
see and feel, hear and touch its
own in this realm of peace divine.

This poem of mine, with which you are all familiar, expresses in a few lines that of which I wish to speak. Silence can be dead or silence can be very active and creative; it can be a dull experience for us, also it can be full of music to the one who has the unfolding vision. The first part of this poem is really an appeal to one's higher nature and instinct.

> Hush! This is the hour of silence
> When soul seeks its refreshment.

Soul needs refreshment just as much as the body does; even more, although we overlook this fact and are carried away by our zeal to take care of the physical. Then the soul suffers. All the restlessness, all the unhappiness, all the weight that the soul feels is due to our failure to give it proper nourishment and refreshment.

Turbulent mind, thou art ever restive
and sport and gain;
Thou art ever mad for new sensation
and art in feverish plight.

Here is the picture of our mind. How restlessly it runs away from us and what sorrow it causes when we yield to its turbulence!

"Wouldst thou rob me of my true happiness?" is the gentle appeal the soul makes to the mind. Sometimes when we are fighting we find it impossible to control the mind. So if we appeal gently we have greater success. "Wouldst thou rob me of my true happiness?" The mind does not want to deprive us of happiness!

Be still, that thou mayest not miss
this new and blessed joy.
How sweet is the sound of silence!
How tender is its touch!
How fragrant is its breathing!
How lovely is its form!
O be still yet awhile that my soul
may see and feel, hear and touch
its own in this realm of peace divine.

Who experiences this blessed joy through the sound of silence; who feels its touch and fragrant breathing; who sees its lovely form? Who? Not the average person. Some people when they are in an attitude of silence, or sitting in the dark, feel dull. Not only that, some even become conscious of evil. In the dark people can become conscious of evil spirits and ghosts, can have all kinds of fancies which are anything but wholesome, which can even overpower them, causing fear or distress. Then again, there are souls who, instead of being oppressed by silence or feeling unholy influences, even enjoy beauty and calm. They feel ecstasy, not through imagination, but have the actual ex-

perience. They take it as an opportunity opening before them. They derive the benefit; their soul is refreshed; their body is revived, and their whole being becomes expanded. What causes it? The mind.

The same mind which is capable of being conscious of evil has also infinite capacity for a nobler consciousness. This does not mean people who are conscious of higher things have a different kind of mind, or that those people who have instinctive consciousness of lower things are born with it or that their mind is organized in that manner. There is a beautiful saying in one of our *Upanishads,* India's forest books of wisdom: "The mind alone is the cause of bondage for man; it is also the cause of his liberation." The mind makes a man its slave; again the same mind liberates him.

If we analyze or pause for a few moments to think quietly we realize the fact that our happiness is not dependent upon things of the world, nor is our unhappiness determined by them. Sometimes we may be unjustly treated by someone, but we are in such a frame of mind, we are so well fortified, that it does not touch us. The abuse or injustice simply rolls off, like the illustration we give in India of the water which does not spoil the lotus leaf, but falls away from it. By its own quality and merit the leaf preserves itself. Water cannot moisten nor contaminate it, although it grows and lives in the water. Similarly, in this world we must not expect that everything will be so arranged that whatever we want will come our way, that there will be no friction or inharmony or unhappiness. That is something we cannot expect. No one with wisdom has happiness established on such basis. However, there are people who in spite of all the changing, shifting

conditions of life seem to find a rock on which they stand; the waves and wind and storm come upon them but they remain unshakeable. Buddha uses a parable to make clear his teaching — that there is an island which man can find, not by travelling on a boat or by means of any other material vehicle, but by traveling through the track of his mind and consciousness. It is a trackless track, he says; unseen, ideal, mystical. So you see, living in the world of changing realities and judging all things by their appearance or surface value we are bound to be affected.

If a man does not believe in God because it is not anything he can verify, or if it does not stand the test of science, what will happen to him? Shall we not believe in soul because we cannot verify it by scientific discoveries? Then what shall we believe in? The things which we perceive and know with our gross faculty of seeing and grasping, and which vanish again, shall we place our trust only in them? No! And then again, our power of seeing and feeling can be increased. As I have already told you, one man becomes conscious of a ghost in the dark, and another man sitting in the same spot, under the same circumstances, becomes conscious of God. He feels the presence of divinity. He feels he is surrounded by great beauty. His whole soul expands with enthusiasm and high aspiration. Who brings it? He, himself.

This is a very simple and very true illustration of life. If we keep a mirror polished it will catch a reflection in every detail; reflection will be accurate and clear. The same mirror when covered with dust or blemish not only does not give us a clear outline of our own face or form, it distorts and shows blemish where

there is no blemish. It gives us wrong vision. In the same way when our mind and consciousness become blemished and distorted it gives us a wrong vision of ourselves. We may say, "Oh, it does not matter if I remain in ignorance and do not achieve anything." The fact is that we cannot stand still. Either we must go forward or we are left behind. In life all things move. No man saves himself by doing nothing. One who thinks also acts, and through his thought he is expanded. It is expected of us that we make our life creative. The greatest blessing, the strongest impetus and the most irresistible desire for action comes to us not so much from our muscles or from outside; it really comes from our inner depth. No man with all his equipment of mind, heart and intellect, with all his physical abilities, can accomplish the greatest amount unless those abilities and gifts are united with his inherent spiritual powers.

Now the question is do we possess higher powers? There would be any number of people who, speaking very honestly, would say that they do not have such powers and that they are more conscious of their lower instincts; that it is natural for them to take revenge or to be angry or to be fearful, and that they cannot imagine a state of mind beyond all these afflictions. Yet these very people will some day discover their unmistakable heritage. It will be unfolded before their eyes.

Spiritual life really means unfolding; true knowledge means that. All the laws of life are not suddenly discovered. They are merely uncovered because they are always there. When the mind becomes capable of taking off layer after layer of ignorance, doubt and distortion which is like a veil over it, then something is

revealed. All this does not happen accidentally. A man becomes wise, notable, a genius, a great man. The greatness comes as a natural unfoldment. The tree which bears fruit is always the one that is cared for. By merely planting a seed we do not fulfill our duty. That is only the beginning. We must be industrious and skillful. When we sow the seed or plant a tree its growth will depend on our nurturing of it. It can grow fast or it can be retarded. Fruition or unfoldment does not take place, as we often imagine, immediately after we have conceived an idea or intellectually accepted it. We have not yet attained it. The first step is to grasp a great idea or ideal. After we have grasped it and are convinced of its value and beneficence, we must unfold it, and that comes through living.

We cannot think on any thought without having it make an impression upon our life. We cannot dwell upon any lofty ideal without finding that our life is becoming nobler and loftier by it. If a man allows himself constantly to rest his mind on higher thought, in nobler association, and through his high aspiration comes in contact with great minds, he actually partakes of their qualities, devotion and spirit. There is no limit to man's mental powers. When first a great idea comes to us in a flash, for the time being it thrills us. We feel that if we are able to hold onto that idea nothing would be impossible. This is true. That flash of truth which passes like lightning over our mind can be kept, because the same mind is capable of retaining ordinary thoughts. I sometimes hear people say it is natural for them to dwell upon the ordinary things but they cannot think on the other, the higher. There is really no high or low. We ourselves cast an hypnotic in-

fluence upon the mind. The man who says that he is capable of thinking only of ordinary things has formed the habit of associating with the things which are mundane and small. But we can counteract that habit. As we counteract it the innate powers, the latent faculties unfold. Man becomes transformed, and it is this transformation that makes us realize and become aware of the fact that we are not bound, that we cannot be bound.

The soul of man is potentially divine. This is a great saying; but a saying does not save us. In order to know it, its true magnitude, to know what it really means, we have to live with it by entering into a new world. We may be travelling on a train, be in the midst of a crowd or surrounded by all sorts of chaotic conditions, and there we find our own consciousness upholding and sustaining us. If we are able to do this should we not find then a greater security and safety, and refrain altogether from complaining? Sometimes we complain that someone has disturbed us, interrupted our thought or taken our inspiration away. These complaints never help us, only make us unhappy, and in turn we make others unhappy. There is a definite way by which we rise above these conditions instead of counteracting them by small means; and that is something we must try to cultivate within our own mind.

In every turn of life, under all circumstances, we shall find that our greatest asset is to be able to live in rhythm, imbued with the true consciousness that we are of the Spirit, that we are born of it, that we are sustained by it and we are altogether one with it. When this consciousness is established we live and work, ever remaining dauntless and unshaken under all conditions. Is this not the beauty in human life? Is it not the most

outstanding trait in the lives of noble men and spiritual personalities? It is this fortitude, that unshakeable quality; but this unshakeable quality does not, as we might imagine, deprive us of our feeling. Great souls feel the sorrow of the world more deeply than we. They are extremely sensitive, but their sensitiveness is combined with inner strength that sustains them. It is, as Lord Buddha put it, living on an island, that blessed mystical island, man's divine refuge which neither storm, nor wind, nor inharmony can affect.

A PARABLE

by Eunice Langenbach

Once there was a man who was shipwrecked. He was very lucky, for the island on which he found himself was very beautiful. There were many kinds of fruit there, and the climate was temperate. So he did not have to worry about food or cold. But he became very lonesome.

One day when he was walking along the beach just before twilight he saw written in the sand, "I, too, am here." He was filled with joy. He called and called. He looked all around, but he could find no one. Nevertheless that night when he went to sleep his heart was full of happiness.

In the early morning he went to the place where he had seen the words written in the sand. But in the night the waves had washed them away. Then arguments began to come to his mind. "Perhaps," he said to himself, "I only imagined all this because I am so lonely."

Now if he had followed this line of thought he would have done nothing further, and if there had been someone on the island he might never have contacted him.

Instead, however, he thought, "Probably it is just my imagination, but if there is someone on this island at least I will try to reach him." So he took some of the choicest fruits he had found and left them near the place where he had seen the writing in the sand.

Next morning the fruit was still there—untouched. He took fruit again, and again he found it untouched. This he did for many days.

One morning when he came to the beach he found his offering was gone! He was overjoyed. But suddenly came the thought, "Perhaps some animal ate it!" This took away his joy, and he felt sad and lonely again. Yet he continued to take his offering each day to the beach, and each morning he found it had been taken.

One evening after twilight as he walked along the shore he suddenly felt as if someone were near him; and then he heard a voice speaking to him. He was deeply stirred. But later that night he became frightened. "Surely my loneliness is getting the best of me," he thought. "I am imagining this voice." And for a few days he did not walk in the evening.

He decided to build a shelter for himself, and was busy with this until he reached a point where he needed help. He ran to the beach and called. There was no answer. In deep despair he went to sleep that night.

Next morning when he woke up, to his amazement he saw that the shelter had been completed while he had been asleep. Then he knew there was someone on the island! No animals had done that. He was full of joy. That night he went for his evening walk with real eagerness. And he heard the voice!

After this, every night he walked with his unseen

companion. Days passed, and at last he began to beg his friend to come to him in the daytime. His friend answered, "Wait." He became more and more impatient.

One evening there was no one on the beach. He walked alone. Next day it was the same. And the next. Gradually he drifted into thinking that he had imagined it all.

Until one day, as he happened to look up at his shelter, he suddenly remembered that it had been finished for him while he slept. How could he have forgotten! Shame overcame him. The friend was real! Taking all the best fruit he could find he brought it to the beach. That night he walked again along the shore. Again he heard the beloved voice.

From now on he never missed his evening walks. He began to feel very close to his companion. A long time passed.

One night his friend said, "Do you want to come with me? The side of the island where I live is pleasanter than this. I have built a house for you there. Come! Leave all this and come with me."

Joyfully he went. That night he slept in his new home. Next morning he looked about him and found he was beside a beautiful curved beach. The sun shone. The water sparkled. All around was beauty. Flowers, green trees, fragrance everywhere.

All of a sudden the sun seemed to shine brighter. He turned and saw his Friend. For this meeting there are no words. And here my story ends.

Where there is the will to will God's Will there is a child of God.

—Thomas Kelly

SEARCH FOR GOD

by Sister Devamata

All living creatures desire God, and all living creatures are seeking God. Do you know any conscious being, even the smallest animal, that is seeking only what is poor, what is hurtful or painful? No. Every conscious being is seeking the best; is seeking that which is rich rather than that which is poor; is seeking that which is good rather than that which is evil; is seeking joy rather than sorrow. Hence all are seeking God, because the best of all is God and the highest of all is God. The greatest riches are to be found in God, and it is only because man does not know what God is, that he does not know he is seeking God.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita* the Lord says, "Wherever there is a manifestation of glory, or power, wherever there is beauty to be seen, know I am that." Of course that is not the whole of God. It means that God is a little more visible there than elsewhere. At that particular point the veil of matter is a little thinner and God is more perceptible. He is everywhere. However, even if a light is burning inside an iron casket, no one sees it. If you wish to know where a light may be, you would not say, "Look at that iron casket!" You would say, "Look at that great light on the lighthouse tower!" Because there it is visible, although the light in the iron casket is just as important.

In India they feel deeply that in the best of each thing is the place to look for God. They have customs and ceremonies which give living expression to this idea and make it a reality. It is a great thing to know that wherever there is a best to us, there is God. If we

form the habit of looking for the best in order to see God, by and by we will begin to see God everywhere, and all things will seem to be best to us.

It becomes, therefore, a question of finding out where the veil is thinnest and where God can be most clearly seen. In the process it also becomes a question as to how we can wear the veil thin so that God can be seen at all times and everywhere, and all of the religious life comes to be a process of purification. Christ has told us that the "pure in heart shall see God." He does not say that the pure in heart shall look to the place where God is, or see that place. The pure in heart shall see God everywhere. They do not have to go to heaven, they do not have to die, they do not have to change their mode of living. They will see God just there where they are. Hence the real journey, the real work of the devotee is just that—getting clean, being purified. The religious life is not an aggressive activity. It is a process of elimination.

Indeed if you really study, you will find that all of life is a process of elimination. You do not have to get anything, but you do have to get rid of something. If you wish to play a musical instrument you do not have to get new muscles, new eyes to see the notes, or a new idea in order to read them. But in the muscles that have not been used there is a great deal of waste material, actual waste substance; the beginner in any department of music merely commences to exercise his muscles to free them, to eliminate that part which checks them and makes them inactive. It is the same with our minds, our artistic tendencies — everything. The whole process of understanding consists of merely eliminating the things which cloud our vision, that we

may see things we did not see before; that we may see deeper into everything.

The great difference between the wise man and the foolish man lies in the choice of what is to be eliminated. The worldy man begins on the outside and he eliminates all of the external things. When he gets through he has no clearer vision than he had when he began, and he reacts back into the world. Always when we get an effect through an external cause, we react back; seeking the outer things carries us back into the same situation from which we started, exactly as a ball thrown with a rubber attached returns to its starting point.

Never lose sight of the fact that when you wish to gain anything in this world, whatever you want — wealth, power, or even happiness through external things — is only for the sake of the state of mind that you seek. Because where is the satisfaction? In your mind. Hence the whole process of purification must be in the mind. If you start to eliminate from the outside and keep your mind the same, you gain only a different state of body or of house or garden, but the mind remains the same. The process goes on in the mind and nowhere else.

Whenever you wish to attain anything even in this world, the first thing to do is to purify the mind. That is the mark of the thoughtful man. Begin to think, to get your ideas clear; have a perfectly distinct vision of what you want and the way to get it. Purify your mind of all other concerns and thoughts except that one, and then follow it. If you begin your process of elimination in this way, you will save your energies; you will save a great deal of friction both within and without, and will attain your end.

Daily exercise of this kind is a very wise thing. Always think a thing out in your mind first. Never mind the external objects in your way. They will take care of themselves. Begin with the intellectual objects—the only ones that will check your progress. Get the light within that comes when you have made your mind perfectly single, and your task will be well done.

If this be true in the ordinary tasks, it is infinitely more true in the permanent tasks of life. Every single moment we must know what we wish to accomplish, and we cannot define our purposes to ourselves too often. Do we want material ends? Then we must be prepared to pay for them with spiritual coin. People have a queer way of thinking they can have all they want on all planes. I remember once hearing a little child of five saying to her brother who was crying for something, "Brother how foolish you are to think that you can have all the things you want all the time. You can only have some of the things you want sometimes."

It is not possible for you to gain on all planes at once. To gain on one you must rise from the other. You cannot live in three stories of your house at once. You can walk from one story to another, and the story you live in will be the best cared for, will feel the most lived in.

So in life you cannot possibly gain both lives—the higher and the lower—at the same time. If you wish to advance you must begin to eliminate the things from the other plane that retard.

Always hold in mind that acquisition—even acquisition of a spiritual kind, of spiritual wisdom—has nothing to do with the plane of religion. You do not have to gain one thing, not even a vision of God; only elim-

inate what clogs your vision, and you will see God. That is the whole secret of spiritual life.

We must make up our mind as to what we wish to gain. As a matter of fact, we all wish to gain God. But in a partial form, or do we wish to gain the whole of Him? If you wish to gain God in a partial form, you will eliminate just so much and no more. If you empty a part of your vessel, you get some of God but you cannot expect to get the whole of God. If you want more you must eliminate more of the world, and at that moment you will find a perfect peace.

It is this partial state, half of the spirit and half of the world, that is causing us so much trouble. We may think we can cheat ourselves with a partial vision of God, but sooner or later something will begin to push us onward.

The only way to eliminate all the things that are keeping us from the highest and best, is to ask the question, "What do I want of life?" We cannot ask it too often. It is not that running and rushing about after the things we want is in itself an evil, but because it represents our state of mind, it is an evil. If your mind is perfectly calm it will bring clearer vision, and you need not fear the outcome when you eliminate that rush and nervous activity. But remember that the process of elimination must always be from the inside. "Do I want it? This thing I am seeking today, have I not already had something like it before, and has it given me any joy or strength?" If you do that, little by little all of these extraneous substances clouding your vision will go away. This constant quiet process of elimination will have its effect.

There is another thing. Real elimination is possible

only at the time of trial, when you are beating against the limitations of your own will. These are not outer ones but inner ones; and if you can eliminate the desire to go your own way, even though it veils your vision and shuts off God from you, then at once you will feel the freedom you long for and you will be at peace. The whole secret of self-surrender is one absolute and complete act of elimination all along the way, and you must practice it little by little.

The thoughtless man strives to change conditions; the thoughtful man strives to accept them. That is the difference. The one battles against conditions that he cannot change, and he falls exhausted by the way. The other is wise enough to change the one condition with which he can deal—his own mind—and he goes on his way rejoicing. It is the greatest secret to learn.

There is also another way, and that is to move entirely away from the thing that troubles you; it is wiser, not to eliminate it from you, but to eliminate yourself from it. If you are in a room and there is an odor there that does not please you, or sounds that trouble you, then if there is no reason for you to stay in that room, how foolish it would be to try and drive out the odor or stop the sounds when you can in a moment walk out into another room and escape. Such things are not really worth troubling about at all.

The more we define our purposes, the more we say what we want is God, the more often shall we be willing to move away from the things that trouble us; and that is the real detachment. Detachment is only partial when you are ready to accept things as they are; it is complete when we walk by and pay no attention to them. That is the final elimination; just drop

things away from you. Our purpose in life is to go to God. We have a very important errand. We must move on.

When we have defined our ideal, when we have begun to love God more in our hearts, when realization comes that it is the one thing we want and that it is greater than the world, greater to us than human attachment, or success in the world or power or wealth, greater than learning or happiness, then we begin to move quickly. The elimination is no longer one of choice, but only the one of habit.

The Lord says in the *Gita*, "Even if the most wicked worships Me with undivided devotion, he should be regarded as good, for he is rightly resolved. Very soon he becomes a righteous soul and attains to eternal peace."

From the moment you have made up your mind, God will take you by the hand and lead you in the right path. He gives you just the discipline you need to purify you. Say God's name and stand firm. Pray, "Grant that we may stand firm while Thou doest Thy work," and God will do it all. This is the great strength of self-surrender. All we have to do is to hold to Him.

You must see God; the Spirit must be realized — that is practical religion. Everything else is good so far as it leads to this one grand idea. That realization is to be attained by renunciation and by meditation — renunciation of all the senses, cutting the chains that bind us down to matter. "I do not want the senses of life, but something higher." That is renunciation. Then, by the power of meditation, undo the mischief that has been done.

—Swami Vivekananda

VIRTUE OF SILENCE

A JATAKA TALE

as told by Sri Nachiketa

Lord Buddha, in one of his incarnations, observed that troubles generally arise out of misunderstandings, and that misunderstandings take place because we speak. We have ideas in our mind and attempt to express them by means of the spoken word, but those to whom we direct our utterances fail to grasp the true import of our concepts and place upon them a distorted interpretation, thus causing misconception and trouble. Therefore, Lord Buddha was determined that in his next incarnation he would observe silence as far as possible.

He was born as a Prince. Very soon it was noticed that although the young heir was most intelligent and certainly had complete understanding of everything— all his physical organs were quite normal, he was neither deaf nor dumb — yet he did not speak. This condition grieved the King deeply. He was resolved to do his utmost to correct what seemed to him a tragic deficiency, so declared publicly that he would present a reward to anyone who could cause the Prince to speak.

Time passed and the Prince grew up to be a young man. One day he went out with a hunting party. Suddenly the attendants espied a pair of pheasants and commenced to give chase. The birds flew from one bush to another and finally disappeared. After searching everywhere and not being able to find them, the little group became exhausted and sat down near a bush to rest. The pheasants, too, were resting near the same bush. Hearing no sounds of the chase they thought

they were safe, so one called to the other. As soon as the sound was uttered the party became alerted and both birds were shot without delay.

The Prince, constantly meditating on the virtue of silence, had known that the pheasants would be safe as long as they did not speak. After the shots were fired he drew near the dying birds, and out of great compassion, gave them this advice, "Why did you speak?"

The man who had fired the shots was standing nearby and heard the Prince's words. He mounted his horse and rode swiftly to the palace to inform the King that he had caused the Prince to speak and demanded of him the promised reward. The King, however, wishing to verify the statement, waited until his son returned. But the Prince was as silent as before, and as no one else had heard him speak, the King thought the man had taken advantage of the situation and had told a lie for the sole purpose of receiving the prize. He became very angry and ordered the offender to be hanged for trying to deceive him. In despair the man fell prostrate before the young Prince, and with tears in his eyes implored him, saying, "You alone can save my life; you alone know that you can really speak; if you don't I shall be hanged."

Again, the Prince remembering the virtue of silence, and seeing the pitiable condition of this man who had brought evil upon himself merely by a few spoken words, was moved by his great compassion to save a life. Once more he said, "Why did you speak?"

Ye will not enter Paradise until ye have faith, and ye will not complete your faith until ye love one another. —MUHAMMAD

THE PART WE PLAY

by Sister Daya

> Earnestness is the path of immortality; thoughtlessness the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die; those who are thoughtless are as if dead already.
>
> —*Gautama Buddha*

This verse from the great Buddhist scripture has always had great significance for me. No matter what our mental equipment may be—no matter whether we are brilliant or stupid or gifted—there is in all of us that possibility of being deeply in earnest; of giving ourselves, with a tremendous depth of conviction, to whatever it is that we feel is worth our doing at all.

The part we play is deeply involved with our most profound philosophical thoughts and points of view. For instance, almost at once the fact of cause and effect confronts us with the eternal question of freedom of will; of how much personal responsibility is ours. If everything that takes place is the result of something that went before, then are we not borne along on the ever recurring wave of cause and effect, so that our will at any given moment is conditioned by this fact?

We may come to the conclusion that since we are the result of what we have been, we must follow a certain course whether we will or no, and that freedom of will, which we take so for granted, does not exist. It is true that in a sense we are all held within certain boundaries, and because of our actions our path is more or less prearranged. Nevertheless, deeply inborn in man's heart, is the conviction that he moves by his own volition, that the choice is always his. This must, I believe, go back to the fact that beyond all the outer

movement of life, beyond the personality, beyond the seeming person, is the final Will itself; the One Being; the One Self of the universe, of which we are a living expression.

With That in our heart as our true entity, we cannot feel compelled by any outer force; there is in us freedom; nothing can take from us this absolute rulership of our own being. Our destiny, our future, our little life, lies in the hands of that part of us which alone can remake and remold us; that innate divinity in us which, through the deep feelings of our heart and the urgings of our mind, through inspiration, through the Ideal, is constantly drawing us away from the partial, the dead and dying, the ignorant and dark, to the marvelous, great, free existence which is its atmosphere and its own Being.

Therefore we must feel that the part we play down here, even in our partial, limited way, is of very great importance. We must never weaken our own effort. Always, always there is that living spirit, that Something within us beyond name and form, beyond mind and speech; Something that will not be denied; Something that is greater than all the bewilderments of life. We have to believe in It, have faith in It, no matter at what point in our journey we begin to sense the necessity of assuming the responsibility for our own destiny. We have to believe that the Light is greater than darkness; that in this house of life of ours there may be great darkness; but let us open one door—or one little crack — and the whole of sunlight comes streaming in. In one instant the darkness is conquered; desroyed in the purity and power of the great, infinite Light within us.

Sometimes we take the benedictions of life very casually; as if the spiritual beneficence that seems to open for us all—at times—a way that is bright and shining and full of compassion, full of promise, is really our due; something we have earned. I have felt when we do have faith in that divine love and the assurance of the divine protection of that great Power, and that all we have to do is to turn to It, that such actual conviction of a saving grace in our life is a sacred trust.

Often we feel that our destiny, our safekeeping, all that we do or say, is in God's hands and that He sustains us; but sometimes I have thought of this in reverse. That in a manner of speaking, God is in our hands. Not that we can make that Great Power suffer; but we can and do make the God-like, the God-illumined ones, suffer very often. They turn back on their sunlit pathway to make the way easier for us. They give their absolutely unstinted love, that counts not the cost; love that gives itself from the depth of being with tenderness, with forgiveness. We fail to realize that theirs is a Christ-love, that is capable of being crucified by man.

We do not understand that we have in our keeping—by our very faith, by our very belief in Something that will never fail us—the most ethereal, beautiful, tender, and wonderful blessing that can come to man's heart. It makes very few demands upon us. It leaves us free in a remarkable way, either to use our blessings—our treasure—for eternal things, or we can let it pass us by without any special modification of our way of thinking or feeling or doing. We do not repay it for its beauty by making a tremendous effort in our own life to protect it, to save it from pain.

Those who carry that love in their hearts and bring

it to us, act as a focusing point for it; a sort of burning glass for the spirit. They can be crucified; they can be made to suffer. Only the great in soul can carry that love in its fullness, but many more than we think carry it to a certain extent. They too have that spirit of compassion, that gentle, overpowering spirit of forgiveness. I think perhaps one of the greatest ills we can do, is to repudiate that compassion and to fling the gift of the gods back into the faces of the gods. Also we make ourselves suffer so terribly, not to build our lives so far as we humanly can upon the foundation of true, sincere, and great effort.

Of course one can be tremendously in earnest; one can put forth a mighty effort to do certain things; even the ambitious man can do an enormous amount in order to satisfy his ambition. The selfish man will expend himself to gain things for his own little self; so that the two qualities must go together—that earnestness of which Lord Buddha speaks—that tremendous earnestness, that determination to carry not only our burden but the burden of love; the burden of compassion for that spirit of life which bountifully bestows upon us love and compassion.

A parable given by Sri Ramakrishna better illustrates what I am trying to say. Three men were passing through a jungle. Suddenly a tiger appeared in the path before them. The first man cried out: "O! Where can we go? Where can we hide? We are doomed! We are doomed! Nothing can save us from this tiger!"

The second man said, quietly, "What do you mean, that nothing can save us? The Lord is everywhere; He can control everything; we do not need to have any fear. He will protect us from the tiger."

But the third man said: "Let us climb that tree! After all, why should we trouble the Lord to protect us?"

We see these three attitudes manifested constantly in the lives of the people around us. Some have no faith at all; they feel that they are doomed and nothing can save them; they are paralyzed by fear of impending disaster.

Sri Ramakrishna calls the second man in the parable a wise man. He could say there is but one Power in the universe; It can defend; It can protect; nothing is impossible unto It. That is a wonderful state of mind. It implies a growing realization, a growing faith in the Power of the universe which is behind all things; without which there can be nothing, but with It there is no danger, no difficulty, too great to overcome.

But the man in whom has been awakened an apprehension, a realization of the divine love that reaches down to the very depths to protect, to shield, to lift, wishes only to save the Beloved. According to Sri Ramakrishna, in the devotional life the devotee of the Highest feels that he must protect the object of his worship. It is a very strange thing; somehow his hands can shield, his will can make sweeter and more beautiful the way of the Lord in the hearts of men. His is the attitude of the mother with the child; he tries to guard the divine Ideal from anything that would cause the least scratch, the least hurt, the least burden.

If we are to make this inner thing real, it must be more than a concept. There are times in all human life when we cannot find an outer support to lean upon; when there is no one to whom we can confide our burdens, our troubles; we are thrown back completely upon

our inner self. Then we find we are not quite sufficient for ourself; the inward part we know is not divine enough to give us the comfort and sustenance and assurance we need. It is then, in that darkness, we turn to some divine conception; something beautiful, all powerful, all compassionate, that will pour into our heart the waters of peace and balm.

When we invoke the power of Light with everything there is in us—with faith that It will never fail to come, faith that there is a Power in the universe and that we have that evoking power, we rely upon It. Sometimes we take advantage of It. We follow our own selfish whims, indulge ourselves, get into needless troubles. Then, in our extremity, we call on that Light, and it is there for us. I believe in my soul that no matter what we may have done, no matter how ignorantly we may have walked, if we honestly, with our whole soul, recognize that spiritual Light and evoke It, the response is absolute and sure.

There is another side to it, however. Our responsibility. True, we are children, and we need great love and great forgiveness. But if the Ideal is real to us, and if the invisible powers we rely upon are not mere figments of the imagination or abstractions but are as real as the hand of our beloved, or the light in the eye of our friend, then we must so live as to spare the weight of our carelessness, our ambition and greed and fear and all unlovely traits we so often manifest. We learn to move in rhythm with that Power; make our Ideal real, full of beneficence, lightness, gladness, and joy. We need to be as tender with It as if it were a child; we spare it our indifference and cruelty. Then we bring into our life something that is incalculable.

That is the earnestness of which the Lord Buddha speaks: a divine, active earnestness which is inspired by the vision of great Truth as the ultimate goal of human existence; vision of complete oblation of the little self in the fires of perfect love, perfect sacrifice, perfect fulfillment—a very high vision for us who wander and struggle along the paths of the world.

But if we can have such high visions, then our life becomes meaningful, simple, lighted up with something beyond the light of this earth. We know very clearly where we go and what our road is. After a while the presence of that divine Power becomes so real and near to us that we know we never stand alone.

Even death seems a small thing to us when we know that with that Love in our heart we can only go from death straight into that innate bliss which is the heart of the Ideal—the heart of God. We are no more afraid. There is only our relationship with that Supreme Power rightly established; and when that is rightly established in selflessness, in love, in uttermost giving, then our relationship with every living thing becomes a relationship with that Beauty, that Godhead; then every friend shines with the light of the One, every hand bears the touch of the One. Everything we enjoy, everything we have, everything that means life to us, is only another expression of infinite tenderness. Therefore we cannot go anywhere—even through the gates of death—without going straight into the innermost being of our supreme, immortal Beloved, the divine Ideal.

If a man makes a slip, enlighten him with loving kindness, and shew him wherein he hath seen amiss. Failing that, blame thyself or not even thyself.

—Marcus Aurelius

SPIRITUAL PREPAREDNESS

by Srimati Gayatri Devi

Every minister whose moral responsibility it is to spiritually feed his flock ought occasionally to take account of the service he renders throughout the year. If he is absolutely honest with himself he will be able to see to just what extent he is successful in the accomplishment of his task. What is the real work of the man or woman who speaks the word of God? Is it merely to preach a sermon, expound a philosophy or to clarify the concepts and doctrines of a particular faith? Is it not rather to give that substantial spiritual help necessary to all souls for the strengthening of their own faith?

We cannot overlook the fact that with most human beings there is always some immediate need. When one need is met others become apparent. Life confronts all men with endless difficulties and problems which constitute the battle of life; and in this struggle all have need of strength, of understanding and wisdom. We all need to support and sustain, to be ministers to one another. In the realm of human relationship there is a very great need for "give and take," for love which offers us the greatest of all supports. When we love we uphold those whom we love. And when we investigate into our own life we will find that in order to give necessary aid to husband, wife, children or friends, we can draw neither from a superficial knowledge of things nor from material assets. Certainly we are to share with others, but the real help must come from the Source of our being. We draw from within that which is worth giving, and by so doing are able to support one another

in the real way. In order to be of such help to family, or friends or dependents, we must first be spiritually fortified ourselves. We need to be established in something substantial which cannot fail us.

It is natural for people to run to those sources wherefrom their help can come. Men and women go to doctors, to psychiatrists, to ministers; and such people, in their specific professions, have the responsibility of giving counsel and recommending remedies. However, these very people are human beings like ourselves. If they lack fortitude or wisdom, if they are not of real calibre and character, if they are weak in faith and endurance, they are bound to fail in their service no matter how much book knowledge or technical skill they may possess.

Here is a problem which every honest person who seeks to help others must face. We do not really do our part merely by preaching a sermon, no matter how inspiring; nor by being momentarily lifted out of ourselves; nor by reaching our own spiritual height for brief periods. Such giving does not entirely complete the obligation; we must give something more. The real offering of those dedicated to the support and upliftment of men is that steadfastness and integrity which come from the storehouse of character and personality. If our own personalities are not rooted in That which dwells behind every human personality, very soon we will run dry and our inspired vocation will become a humdrum profession.

There is one thought from which I have never parted throughout these years of ministry: that ministry calls for more than the gifts of mind and intellect, more than the gift of the heart. It demands that additional some-

thing which is a man's deep inner life. This inner life must be lived constantly and consistently; not just one day but every day, every hour, every single moment. This is what will keep us always prepared.

The theme *Spiritual Preparedness* I have borrowed from Swami Paramananda. He gave an address on it many years ago, shortly before the world was plunged into another global war. In those days "preparedness" was a word frequently read and heard. How do we prepare ourselves and for what purpose? In trouble, crisis or disaster we need protection, an anchorage, a sustaining influence. This need of each individual is a very personal one, for each human being is called upon to meet his own particular tests of time, change and circumstance. No one can fight his battle but himself. Each one of us must fulfill his individual destiny. The supreme need is not a superficial adherence to God, but a full establishment in the consciousness of that Reality. If this side of our life is not neglected, if our spiritual need is fulfilled by constantly living close to the Eternal as we should, we shall never be caught unaware, nor shall we be overthrown by life's accidents, emergencies and eventualities.

How very carefully we direct our material existence, and how we plan for its protection and comfort! We think of the morrow; we look to the future and its needs. We carry health and accident insurance; we have savings accounts; we insure our lives—do everything in our power in order to have such safety and security. This is part of our way of life because we feel the urgency for material preparedness. Therefore we lose neither time nor opportunity to safeguard ourselves. However, in spite of all our efforts toward pre-

paredness, do they completely protect us? Let us admit that no degree of material preparation is sufficient preservation or protection. No matter how we plan we know very little about the future. So we come to see that all our material preparedness is inadequate for our need, for our own preservation, unless we combine it with something else—with *spiritual preparedness.*

"How do we prepare ourselves spiritually?" you may ask. I have already given the answer: by recognizing your own need and life's spiritual values and then going beyond your recognition—doing something about it, just as you are always doing something in order to provide for tomorrow. "I must provide for tomorrow. I must not spend too much. I must be careful. I must not neglect my children's future." We think so carefully along these lines. We must learn to think as carefully about the other. We must do something!

To prepare ourselves spiritually we have one thing to do. That is our day by day effort to live our life in faith; to allow none of our fears and doubts and anxieties to undermine our faith. What, then, shall we do about these apprehensions? Can we throw them overboard? We have them about our material life; so many of our anxieties are the product of our thought concerning our material preservation. Sickness, loss of material assets —there are, oh, so many avenues through which fear sets in. How do we counteract it? It is by allying ourselves, to the extent of which we are capable, with the undying, with the imperishable, with the permanent, so that the fearful issues can be met without any disastrous result.

To me the disaster of a man is always that he cannot stand up against life's inevitable realities. I have seen

many people who were very sure of themselves, very strong; strong in their religious faith; with fine intellects, living a kind and highly ethical life; and I have seen them go under in a crisis. Why? Because they put too much faith in their own personal integrity. They put too great a trust in their own moral behavior. They were so sure of themselves and forgot that no matter how strong we may be in the resources of our own being, still our strength is insufficient unless it is combined with that other Power which is our inner help.

It is so necessary to emphasize again and again the importance of making our lives so secure in God that we can meet anything. This does not mean that we are to be apprehensive or pessimistic, constantly imagining that everything might go wrong. Such a state of mind only invites troubles for ourselves by our very fears. What I do mean is that we can be always spiritually prepared, if we do not sever ourselves from the real, substantial part of our being. To do this we need more than the guidance of a psychiatrist or an interview with the minister. We need faith in our own personal life combined with faith in our Maker—a faith so vital that we can say, "Just as I cannot live without food or drink or sleep, so I cannot live without the assurance from moment to moment that I belong somewhere in God's almighty plan, that my place is secure in Him."

Who can give us such security? Who can bring us this assurance? How can we be established in this awareness? Believe me, no one can do this for you. Your faith is your faith. Your light is your light. If you have a little faith you have to increase it. If you have a small light you can put more oil into it and keep it burning. If we do not cultivate what we have,

if we do not keep it alive, if we do not enhance and strengthen our faith, we cannot bring to ourselves the help we need. You may say, "I don't feel drawn to this sort of spiritual life; in fact, I feel alienated from it." If this is our attitude, then no one can save us or give us the fortitude to meet the suffering, the sorrow, the struggle that will come about through our life's journey.

A person who through ignorance, delusion or distorted notion severs himself from himself, from his true Being, will inspire our sympathy, but we are helpless to aid him. Because man's true helper is himself. If he receives assistance from the Source, it is because he brings his own self before that Source of his help and cries out in recognition of his own ignorance, "Oh, Lord, help me; forsake me not!" This is not childish; this is not sentimental; this is not shallow or superficial. This is the heart of religion, the heart of our relationship with God.

We must make our hearts such receptacles, our minds such open channels, our consciousnesses such free avenues that the vicissitudes of life, circumstances, people, conditions, our own fears and anxieties will not block them. The empty vessel needs to be filled but not with non-essentials. I have said to you again and again, "Never let anyone or anything come between you and your God." Religion is a very personal affair. We have right; we have claim upon the Divine. The very urgency of our spirit makes our claim just and proper! If we can live always spiritually prepared by our basic, unobstructed connection with Godhead, our needs will be met, and indeed we will be able to extend our helpfulness to all who are in need.

Man's need of God is fundamental, and it is of every

day and every moment. He should not feel guilty or humiliated that he is not self-sufficient. He is Self-sufficient in the right way. When the greater Power enters into his being and takes possession of him, then he becomes fully, truly sufficient unto himself. In order to live thus we must make room in our life for prayer, for time to brush off everything else and find ourselves in a secluded area of our own being where we may experience ourselves, our security in God.

Perhaps I should speak of the world and our relationship to it. The fact is if our spiritual life is taken care of we can do our part in the world. What good does it do us to brood or take upon ourselves the troubles of the world? If we are aware of the world tragedy, the world need, then we must approach it in the right way. How can we help people most? What should be our contribution? Should we live complacent, selfish, comfortable personal lives and let the world go by? Should we not share in the world's sorrows and struggles? Well, the fact is there is no escape. Always as human beings we share one another's burdens. What your brother in Hungary is going through is not different from what you go through in your own sphere of life. Experience comes to us in varying forms at different stages of our life. Therefore, the answer to the world need is the same as the answer to your own need. If you are thinking of how to remedy the ills of that world, its tyranny, its cruelty, its evil, remember that it cannot be handled by campaigns and conferences. No matter how much material help you give to needy people, still they will have their need, the need of something other by which they will be able to meet their material problems as they should, and grow stronger by it.

Mahatma Gandhi when once interviewed by Dr. John Mott, Christian educator and missionary and a deeply religious man, very active in youth education, was asked, "What do you advise for your youth and its needs?" Gandhi answered, in typical Indian fashion, "I recommend prayer for them!" As students, what do they care about praying? They are too busy with football or baseball outside their studies—if they are interested in studies at all. And, of course, American children have toys and gadgets and television. How can you teach children and youth the meaning and efficacy of prayer? How would it work if in our time, in America, someone gave this advice, "I recommend prayer for them"? Children become youths and youths become mature men and women. If they have had no training, no spiritual training, though they have been well cultivated along all other lines, will they be able to meet life when it faces them? No. So we cannot say that spiritual education can be neglected.

By prayer let us understand that it is not a repetition of words or learning the Lord's Prayer from the Bible. It is becoming aware and more aware of the existence and immensity and reality of God. If as children, as adults, we can be made aware of our true relationship with our Maker, prayer will not be a form. It will not be something imposed upon us. It will become the spontaneous expression of our heart due to the urgency of our own need. So from the churches, the homes, the schools—wherever people gather together for guidance or inspiration — should be proclaimed this message: Man must recognize his own spiritual need and direct his life toward its fulfillment. And remember, the influence you exert by living in a certain way and being

a certain type of character will do far more toward helping another than anything you could tell him.

So I have this to say to you who are the members of my spiritual family—for the whole world, all of mankind are the members of our spiritual family—beware of your own need. Do not be careless or neglectful. It does not matter what other people do or do not do. Where others falter and fail, that should not be your concern. Keep your mind away from human frailties and disappointments. Be responsible within yourself, to yourself and to God who dwells within you. Live your life as you should live, as you really want to live, and you can really come to the end of all your struggles and find that deep and unfailing happiness which will mark you with tranquility. Is this not our real need—inner peace, deep tranquility, security of spirit? Can we deny it? No, for this is every human being's need, and it can be had, not by some magic or miracle, not by the gift of someone outside, but by the unfoldment of the gifts that lie buried within.

So take the direction, the spiritual direction, toward yourself. You are the one who discloses within yourself by your own life and action, by your own consciousness, the meaning of those words, "in Whom we live and move and have our being." If you can do this by your efforts, your aspiration, your soul's urgency, you will always be spiritually prepared — prepared for this year, next year and all the years to come. We must take care of the here and now, then we will have no concern for that which lies ahead. This we do by making ourselves over to that Power which dwells within us, by affirming and reaffirming our faith in that Power. Pray in all humility, no matter what your bereavements and

losses and struggles and fears may be, that you will never, never lose your hold upon Him; that He will always hold you safely in His keeping. Then all will be well with you now and forever.

If we ask of the saints how they achieved spiritual effectiveness, they are only able to reply that, in so far as they did it themselves, they did it by love and prayer. A love that is very humble and homely; a prayer that is full of adoration and of confidence. Love and prayer, on their lips, are not mere nice words; they are the names of tremendous powers, able to transform in a literal sense personality and make it more and more that which it is meant to be — the agent of the Holy Spirit of the world. —Evelyn Underhill

OUR LORD

by E. J.

The Lord, to some, is but a Word;
A frosty Being, quite unstirr'd—
No human woe or ill discerning.

But O! my Lord is different;
His loving heart is most intent
To feel and know His children's yearning.

His heart is Love, His Spirit grace,
And deep compassion is His face
While high our thoughts He's turning.

Our tender Lord doth take us where
Nor woe exists, nor carking care,
But soul's own light, effulgent burning.

AN APPRECIATION

by Charles Murray

In the following poem the student of philosophy will readily discern the stern exhortation of the East to "Arise, awake; now is the time; here is the place; stop not 'till the goal is reached!" Seize each opportunity *now* as it comes to you in this little finite circle of your present life as a precious gift of God, for it may never come to you again in this lifetime, though perhaps it may in some far-off reincarnation. The Father's voice is here heard calling: "Arise; school time; get up or you will be late!"

OPPORTUNITY

by John James Ingalls

Master of human destinies am I.
Fame, love, and fortune on my footsteps wait.
Cities and fields I walk; I penetrate
Deserts and seas remote, and, passing by
Hovel, and mart, and palace soon or late
I knock, unbidden, once at every gate!
If sleeping, wake—if feasting, rise before
I turn away. It is the hour of fate,
And they who follow me reach every state
Mortals desire, and conquer every foe
Save death; but those who doubt or hesitate,
Condemned to failure, penury and woe,
Seek me in vain and uselessly implore—
I answer not, and I return no more.

In this next lovely poem, Walter Malone seems to take exception to the fatalistic note and insistent urging for immediate action in "Opportunity's" message

with its strong protest against delay or procrastination and its threat of being once lost, returns no more. In contrast it points to a more hopeful horizon in the much larger circle of a future infinite life with its divine promise where no opportunity or effort is forever lost but is ever present and returns every day — later if you are not prepared or ready now.

It really does not oppose or contradict "Opportunity's" urgent call for immediate action, for grasping one's opportunities now; but it ignores the element of time and kindly points to another tomorrow if one's chance be unhappily neglected today. It says, in effect, even if you fail a thousand times, try again; you are bound to succeed. It does not condone lethargy or procrastination but promises final success with courage, perseverence and faith in the goodness of God's plan.

Here is Mother's loving admonition and encouragement gently urging and hopefully saying, "Now dry your tears; you will be stronger and will do better tomorrow, or perhaps next time. You are sure to succeed for my love is always with you. Run along now while the sun is shining, and you are sure to get good marks today. Be patient and all will be well."

OPPORTUNITY'S REPLY

by Walter Malone

They do me wrong who say I come no more
When once I knock and fail to find you in;
For every day I stand outside your door
And bid you wake, and rise to fight and win.

Wail not for precious chances passed away!
Weep not for golden ages on the wane!
Each night I burn the records of the day;
At sunrise every soul is born again.

Dost thou behold thy lost youth all aghast?
Dost reel from righteous retribution's blow?
Then turn from blotted archives of the past
And find the future's pages white as snow.

Art thou a mourner? Rouse thee from thy spell.
Art thou a sinner? Sins may be forgiven;
Each morning gives thee wings to fly from hell,
Each night a star to guide thy feet to Heaven.

Laugh like a boy at splendors that have sped;
To vanquished joys be blind and deaf and dumb;
My judgments seal the dead past with the dead,
But never bind a moment yet to come.

Though deep in mire, wring not your hands and weep;
I lend my arm to all who say, "I can!"
No shamefaced outcast ever sank so deep
But yet might rise again and be a man.

Prayer is called meditation until it has produced devotion, and then it is converted into contemplation. As bees fly here and there gathering honey, but having heaped it together they work in it for the pleasure they take in its sweetness, so we meditate to gather the love of God, but having gathered it we contemplate God and His goodness. So meditation is an attentive thought voluntarily reiterated or entertained in the mind to excite the will to holy affections and resolutions, whereas contemplation is a loving, simple and permanent attention of the spirit to divine things. Meditation considers in detail the objects calculated to move us, but contemplation takes a simple and collected view of the object which it loves. —St. Francis de Sales

TENDERNESS AND CHARITY

by William James

Proceeding onwards in our search of religious extravagance, we next come upon excesses of Tenderness and Charity. Here saintliness has to face the charge of preserving the unfit, and breeding parasites and beggars. "Resist not evil," "Love your enemies," these are saintly maxims of which men of this world find it hard to speak without impatience. Are the men of this world right, or are the saints in possession of the deeper range of truth?

No simple answer is possible. Here, if anywhere, one feels the complexity of the moral life, and the mysteriousness of the way in which facts and ideals are interwoven . . . .

Herbert Spencer tells us that the perfect man's conduct will appear perfect only when the environment is perfect: to no inferior environment is it suitably adapted. We may paraphrase this by cordially admitting that saintly conduct would be the most perfect conduct conceivable in an environment where all were saints already; but by adding that in an environment where few are saints, and many the exact reverse of saints, it must be ill adapted. We must frankly confess, then, using our empirical common sense and ordinary practical prejudices, that in the world that actually is, the virtues of sympathy, charity, and non-resistance may be, and often have been, manifested in excess. The powers of darkness have systematically taken advantage of them. The whole modern scientific organization of charity is a consequence of the failure of simply giving alms. The whole history of constitutional govern-

ment is a commentary on the excellence of resisting evil, and when one cheek is smitten, of smiting back and not turning the other cheek also . . . .

And yet you are sure, as I am sure, that were the world confined to these hard-headed, hard-hearted, and hard-fisted methods exclusively, were there no one prompt to help a brother first, and find out afterwards whether he were worthy; no one willing to drown his private wrongs in pity for the wronger's person; no one ready to be duped many a time rather than live always on suspicion; no one glad to treat individuals passionately and impulsively rather than by general rules of prudence; the world would be an infinitely worse place than it is now to live in . . . .

The saints, existing in this way, may, with their extravagances of human tenderness, be prophetic. Nay, innumerable times they have proved themselves phophetic. Treating those whom they met, in spite of the past, in spite of all appearances, as worthy, they have stimulated them to *be* worthy, miraculously transformed them by their radiant example and by the challenge of their expectation.

From this point of view we may admit the human charity which we find in all saints, and the great excess of it which we find in some saints, to be a genuinely creative social force, tending to make real a degree of virtue which it alone is ready to assume as possible. The saints are authors, *auctores,* increasers, of goodness. The potentialities of development in human souls are unfathomable. So many who seemed irretrievably hardened have in point of fact been softened, converted, regenerated, in ways that amazed the subjects even more than they surprised the spectators, that

we never can be sure in advance of any man that his salvation by the way of love is hopeless . . . . The saints, with their extravagance of human tenderness, are the great torch-bearers . . . the tip of the wedge, the clearers of the darkness . . . The world is not yet with them, so they often seem in the midst of the world's affairs to be preposterous. Yet they are impregnators of the world, vivifiers and animaters of potentialities of goodness which but for them would lie forever dormant. It is not possible to be quite as mean as we naturally are, when they have passed before us. . .

No one who is not willing to try charity, to try non-resistance as the saint is always willing, can tell whether these methods will or will not succeed. When they do succeed, they are far more powerfully successful than force or worldly prudence. Force destroys enemies; and the best that can be said of prudence is that it keeps what we already have in safety. But non-resistance, when successful, turns enemies into friends; and charity regenerates its objects. These saintly methods are, as I said, creative energies; and genuine saints find in the elevated excitement with which their faith endows them an authority and impressiveness which makes them irresistible in situations where men of shallower nature cannot get on at all without the use of worldly prudence. This practical proof that worldly wisdom may be safely transcended is the saint's magic gift to mankind. Not only does his vision of a better world console us for the generally prevailing prose and barrenness; but even when on the whole we have to confess him ill adapted, he makes some converts, and the environment gets better for his ministry. He is an effective ferment of goodness, a slow transmuter of the earthly into a more heavenly order.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

by Esther Orlander

O, Prince of the Bharata race (Krishna, the Divine Teacher is speaking to his disciple, Arjuna) now hear from me regarding the three-fold happiness, that happiness which one enjoys by habit and by which one comes to the end of pain.

That which is like poison in the beginning and like nectar in the end, that happiness is said to be Sattwica (pure), born of the blissful knowledge of the Self.

That happiness which arises from the contact of the senses with sense-objects and is like nectar in the beginning but like poison in the end, is declared to be Rajasica.

That happiness which begins and ends in self-delusion, arising from sleep, indolence and false perception, is declared to be Tamasica. —*Bhagavad-Gita*

The pursuit of happiness in the form of satisfaction, of self-preservation and other recognized needs is undoubtedly, and always has been, the basic pursuit of all life. Man's pursuit of happiness has grown more and more complicated, and at the same time more and more avid, by the ever-increasing complexities of his psychological development. This, in addition to the natural demands of his normal appetites, has contributed all the insatiable demands of desires which are the psychological manifestations of memory and imagination.

So long as man is completely bound to the physical, the victim of his own animal appetites and desires, so long as he has had no glimpse of an horizon beyond that of the world of these appetites and desires, the happiness which he pursues is on the lowest level of personality manifestation. This type of happiness, very real and very important in the mind of him who pursues it, is what the *Gita* calls *Tamasic* happiness. It is closely akin to that satisfaction—I think we may call

it happiness—for which the animal strives in his world of lower evolutionary manifestation.

Such solely physical happiness is often gross. At best it is ephemeral. It is the moment of blinding light which the moth experiences as it rushes headlong into the flame to its destruction. Caught on the eternally revolving wheel of life, the evolving soul whose discriminatory powers are no further developed than this must continue to repeat through life after life the same stupid, futile actions. He must endure their same painful and unhappy after-effects until that day when, in some momentous life-experience, he dimly awakens to his own misery and begins to wonder why he is so miserable; begins to wonder if there can be any causal connection between his misery and his own actions. It is often, indeed, in the very depth of such misery, that the first gleam of the spirit's light appears to the soul lost in the black night of its ignorance. For ever the dawn grows out of the darkness; and the beginning of the path to true happiness, permanent happiness, is to be found, more often than not, in man's hopelessness, in his weariness; in the hopelessness of desires that can never be fulfilled; in the weariness of desires that, though filled, leave the bitter after-taste of disgust and disillusion.

Man need not be on quite so low and wholly physical a rung of the ladder of evolution still to spend his life pursuing a happiness that proves to be sometimes a will-o'-the-wisp, sometimes like that which, as the *Gita* puts it, "is like nectar in the beginning and like poison in the end." In love with life, enamored with the beautiful senses or with the even more beautiful powers of his own mind, he sets what seems to him an altogether de-

sirable goal of happiness. Sometimes he falls short of his goal; sometimes he reaches it only to find it has crumbled, dissolved, in his grasp.

In either case he is unhappy and often bitter. He has no way to turn for comfort. No longer does he have the faith of his forefathers which, even though life was filled to the brim with disappointments, with grief and often with despair, nevertheless held out to the faithful the sure promise of heaven after death, where compensation for earthly woes was somehow stored up for everlasting enjoyment. Modern man has lost his belief in such a heaven; he has lost his faith in a God who answers human prayers. So disbelieving all naive hope for divine aid, he is thrown back to earth, to his own resources, to slake as best he can his thirst for happiness among the satisfactions which life holds forth and with which she constantly tempts him.

With what result? The little interims of pleasure come and go. Unfailingly attendant upon them are sickness, sorrow and sometimes tragic, always inevitable death. No matter how secure we try to make our little refuges so that we may dream our happy dreams in life's sunshine, sooner or later we find they are just sand fortresses on the shore of life; the waves of adversity continue relentlessly, when we least expect it, to roll in and obliterate them. It would seem that the only delight of man's earthly desires lies, not in their achievement but in the pursuit. Even if we seem to attain the goal for which we have struggled, the time comes when we are compelled to acknowledge that there is no such thing as real satisfaction of desire. This realization may take not only years, but lifetimes. In his growth man can learn only by firsthand experience.

The trial and error method — slow but sure — will alone avail. At long last he does learn; he recognizes and admits his defeat in his battle with outward things.

Over and over these lessons are repeated. The veritable laws of life are demonstrated for man's edification again and again: namely that there is no lasting satisfaction of desire, there is no perfect complacency for the self-centered personality. Once we actually face these facts — these superficial attitudes — once we become altogether conscious of them as firmly established convictions we come to the realization that the happiness we sought so avidly in our egotistic way, while it was like nectar in the beginning, turns out to be indeed nothing but poison in the end.

No one can deny that the age in which we live is characterized in a large measure by moral confusion. The most apparent token of this confusion is man's present day unhappiness his deep dissatisfaction with his own state. There are those who feel that in his frustration he is degenerating into a state of spiritual decadence; that, having no hope, there is no hope for him.

But this is not the way of God with man. There is always hope for us. In the fact of our deep despair indeed may lie the truest hope for happiness. As I said before, dawn comes ever and only out of dark night. When we really reach the stage of desperate unhappiness our search for peace begins in earnest. We feel utterly lost. From the depths of our being we cry out: Lord, what can I do to be saved?

Such a prayer never goes unanswered. Gradually we become conscious of a new reality faintly suggesting itself in the dark background of our being. Slowly

if we can succeed in quieting our still clamoring senses, if we can be silent and attentive, this new something within us makes itself felt; it begins to draw us away from our habitual selves, loosening their hold on us. This new something is a faint light at first, but it is irresistible. It compels our attention. We cannot ignore it. Little by little it grows stronger. It begins to light up the dark places; we become aware of an inner life that heretofore has been completely hidden to us. We become aware that this new inner life, this new reality, is setting itself against the outer, the superficial unrealities of our former habitual way of life. It draws us in an entirely opposite direction. Our old life of appetite and desire drew us outward into the world of things; this leads us inward. In a most mysterious way we have the sense of going home, of going where we truly belong.

This new experience of reality brings an inward sense of the real value of all those things which heretofore we have experienced solely in their superficial aspects. We become aware of a growing power of discrimination between that which is true and that which is not true, between that which is the reality of any experience, be it objective or subjective, and that which only appears to be its reality.

How can we be sure that this new inner experience is the real? Have you ever watched, in the evening twilight, as I have so often done from the window of my home on the Mojave desert, the silver crescent of the new moon rising over the mountain, bearing within its arms the old moon, a dull ball of murkiness? The silver crescent is shining, as we know, in the sun's light; the murky ball glows dully with earth-shine.

Could you ever fail to be convinced that new light is different from that of the old dull glow?

Not less undoubted will be the distinction in your mind between the old habitual outward unrealities and the new reality within your inmost being. No one in whom the light of rightness has dawned can have any doubt of the relative values of a life of sense gratification and a life according to the dictates of the spirit within, which we now recognize and accept as our higher Self. No one who has seen this light can have any doubt about the difference between wisdom and unwisdom, even when such unwisdom has the prestige of great knowledge about the outward appearance of things. No one in whom the light of rightness has dawned can fail to discriminate in this light between reality and unreality, no matter how insistent are the latter's claim to reality.

This new light and power dawning within us behind our personalities is the light and power of the Higher Self. It waits to take over the guidance of our lives completely; it waits to become our final spiritual imperative. On the one hand, it illumines conscience with its truth and enables conscience to serve as a dependable guide to righteous action; on the other hand, it reveals the wrongness of our perceiving reality in the unreality of the outward, what we call the objective, thing. Such true perceiving is our new spiritual understanding, the reflection of divine wisdom. Conscience, as we know full well, is a primitive instinct in man. Influenced by intellectual judgment, it can be highly developed even without a parallel development in the spiritual understanding. The full functioning of the Higher Self in man is reached, however, only when the power of

conscience becomes radiant with divine wisdom. It is such a perfected conscience that alone can lead man to mastery over life.

Gradually we become aware that the inner light of Reality which we experience as our Higher Self, is an ever on-going light of higher and still higher states of being. It carries with it, therefore, an ever on-going sense of everlastingness, an ever on-going sense that its growth and its splendor are limitless, are infinite. Yet, while we come to sense its power as absolutely limitless and infinite, at the same time we feel it to be our most intimate possession, because it is, in truth, our own inmost being. It dawns on us first, perhaps, as a far-off vision, but it somehow mysteriously but certainly conveys to us the secret that a full realization of Itself is our ultimate goal in life. It conveys to us the promise that it is the law of life that we shall ultimately realize our ultimate perfection as our complete identity with this Highest Self.

How this intimation justifies all our hard and bitter experiences of life! Had we found permanent satisfaction in the husks of life, we would never have had the will, the urge, to continue the quest toward our ultimate highest destiny. In this understanding we begin to take a different attitude toward the disappointments of our habitual lives. We begin to look upon them, not as a misfortune or a futility, but as the necessary schooling, the necessary prodding to urge us away from the broad highway that leads to destruction, onto the narrow way that leads to life in its fulness and perfection. We come thus to respect life just as it is; we begin to meet its problems in a spirit of acceptance, with a determination to absorb from each difficult experience the essence of its lesson for our spirit.

This attitude, we find to our amazement, constitutes the solution of our problem. Disappointment turns into serene acceptance. Serene acceptance of what cannot be easily changed in life is the essence of peace, and in peace lies true happiness. We can afford to be serene even in life's fiercest storms, for we know that our destiny is far higher than merely to be happy in the gratification of our human desires. It is rather to enter into our Father's kingdom, the kingdom of our Highest Self, whose reality is limitless, and is infinite.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND HOLY MOTHER

from Holy Mother *by Swami Gambhirananda**

The Master always took pains to establish abidingly sweet relationships among the devotees and the Mother. When his devotee Balaram Babu's wife fell seriously ill, the Master told the Mother, "Go, visit her." The Mother was used to long walks and a distance of about five miles from the Kali temple to Balaram's house was not at all too long for her to cover on foot. But then, part of the way lay through the thickly populated city, and the Mother's sense of propriety told her that it would not be commendable for the Master's wife to be seen walking through the streets of Calcutta; and hence she said, "How am I to go? There's no conveyance." The Master replied, "What! You won't go when my Balaram's family is facing disaster? You will walk; go on foot." But the Mother had not to walk; for a palanquin was hired and she went in it to the devotee's house. It may be added in passing that during her stay at Shyampukur she visited Balaram's

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ailing wife once again on foot, and that of her own accord.

There is a funny incident suggestive of the Master's witty way of getting his own ideas expressed and executed through the medium of other people. Gauri-Ma was then a constant visitor to Dakshineswar, and she sometimes spent the night with the Mother at the Nahabat. One day the Master went there and asked her in the Mother's presence, "Tell me, Gaur-dasi, whom do you love more, me or her?" That sprightly lady avoided a direct answer and with a view to adding to the gaiety of the situation, sang in a sweet voice:

> You aren't greater than Radha (your sweetheart),
> O Fluteplayer (Krishna),
> People in danger call on You as Madhusudana;
> But when it's Your turn to cry, You make Your
> flute call, "O thou Radha, thou young maid."

The meaning of the song was very clear. The Mother pressed Gauri-Ma's hand in sheer shame, and the Master left smiling in utter discomfiture.

We get the other illustration of a similar nature from the *Sri Ramakrishna Punthi*. One day Sri Kalipada Ghosh's wife came to the Master with a sorrowful face and a heart full of distress to tell her tale of woe. Her husband had fallen into bad company and was bringing ruin on the whole family; if the Master could prescribe some remedy, she would be saved from a life of torment. Kali Babu had not visited the Master up till then; and the people of Calcutta had not as yet come to recognize in the Master a Prophet of the highest spiritual order who was absolutely free from any show of supernatural powers. Not knowing much of this unsullied saintliness, the lady wanted some kind of charm from him. This was galling to the Master, but for some reason best

known to him — it might have been through sheer fun or real pity for the lady, or some inscrutable design — he did not dismiss her outright, but advised her to go to the Nahabat saying, "There's a woman there. Tell her everything without reserve, and she will give you the real remedy. She knows such mantras and charms, and in this matter her power is greater than mine." The Holy Mother was then at worship with her mind soaring in a domain of extreme compassion. She heard the woman with full sympathy, but did not do anything forthwith, for it appeared to her that the Master was only playing a little fun. And yet unwilling to disappoint such a distressed soul, she said, "What, after all can I know, my child? In truth, he knows the charm; do go to him." Finding the woman returning, the Master perhaps concluded that the fun had worked; accordingly, to add more zest to it, he sent her again to the Nahabat. When the lady had thus been tossed between the Master and Mother thrice, the Mother took pity on her. She did not want to reduce the whole affair to a merry joke, thus adding insult to injury. Accordingly she consoled her and taking a bel leaf out of the offerings made to the deity, handed it over to her saying, "Take this with you, my child; this will fulfil your desire." The lady received the leaf with the greatest reverence and took leave of the Mother. In due course Kalipada Ghosh's mind took a turn for the better, and by stages he became one of the staunch followers of the Master. Through this small incident the Master made the Mother open out her heart in practical benevolence.

Thus as days rolled on, the Mother was becoming consciously or unconsciously more and more intimately

associated with the Master's mission of spiritual regeneration, though the mode of expression of her infinite power was naturally orientated by her predominant mood of motherliness . . . .

When and how was this pure and selfless yearning for divine motherhood first kindled in the recesses of the Mother's heart? Perhaps she had it in her to the fullest extent even before she was aware of it. This is the natural psychological process. As a matter of fact, we noticed that in her girlhood she attended on her younger brothers, and helped to cool by fanning the food served to famished people. Events of a similar nature have forced themselves on our attention when studying her relations with the devotees at Dakshineswar. But here we are thinking more of the conscious rise of that sentiment and its operation, rather than its hidden working.

She heard her sympathetic friends condemning all childless women as unfortunate and inauspicious. Her mother, too, lamented at times thus: "To what a mad son-in-law have I married my daughter! Alas, she has no family life, no child, and does not hear anyone calling her 'mother'." The Master one day heard this and said, "Dear mother-in-law, you need have no disappointment on that score. Your daughter will have so many children, you will see in the long run, that the distressing call of 'mother' will make her bewildered."

The Master's prophecy apart, the Mother herself related how by constantly listening to others, the craving for children woke up in her heart: "I heard, ever and anon, both here and at Kamarpukur, that a woman, unless she has become a mother, is not fit for any auspicious work. A barren woman cannot take part in any auspicious work. I was very young then. These

words set me thinking sorrowfully,'Of a truth,should a single son be denied me?' When I went to Dakshineswar, the question once arose in my mind. When I first had the thought, I did not tell anybody; but the Master said spontaneously, 'Why do you worry? I shall leave you such jewels of children as one can hardly get even if one performs the severest of austerity, to the extent of cutting off one's head. You will find in the end so many children calling you "mother," that you will be unable to manage them all'."

Women have been cherishing this desire for children in their hearts from time immemorial. True it is that the Mother had some taste of this motherhood even during the lifetime of the Master; but that did not satisfy her infinite yearning. The Mother herself has spoken of her feeling of disappointment: "When the Master departed, I thought in solitude — I was then at Kamarpukur, 'I've no son, and nothing else; what will be my lot?' One day the Master appeared and said, 'Why do you worry? You want one son; I have left for you all these jewels of sons. In time many will call you mother'."

Never despair. There is no cause for despair. The law of Karma is irresistible. If you do a good deed, it will produce a good effect. With sincere devotion or without it, in any way you like, if you chant the holy Name of God, it will always bring you good. The result is inevitable. Therefore shake off all your despair and push on in the struggle with strictness and regularity. Then peace will surely come and dwell in you. Through meditation, not only does the mind become pacified, but the body also improves and diseases lessen.

—Swami Brahmananda

SHINGON: THE BUDDHISM OF STARS AND FLOWERS

by David Grindell

(Concluded)

> The lowliest thing one knows: for instance, if one could understand a flower as it has its being in God—this would be a higher thing than the whole world!
>
> —*Meister Eckhart*

> Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
> There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.
>
> —*Walt Whitman*

It was in 807, the year after his return from China, when Kobo Daishi founded the sect of Shingon. Its position within the total historical development of Buddhism is interesting and distinctive: Shingon belongs neither to Hinayana ("the Lesser Vehicle") nor, in the stricter sense, to Mahayana ("the Greater Vehicle"). It is best considered an offshoot, doubtless indeed the finest flower, of Vajrayana (or "Diamond Vehicle") Buddhism. This third form, essentially Tantric in Buddhist guise, is often called Mantrayana.

The broad scope of the teachings is well indicated in the words of Masaharu Anesaki: "(Shingon) was a mystical consummation of the cosmological, physical, and psychological speculations elaborated in India, Central Asia, China and Japan . . . . The Shingon mysticism was, in fact, a culmination of Buddhist philosophical thought, which tried to unite in a harmonious whole not only the different schools of Buddhism, but also all other religions and philosphies with which it came into contact."

Was it not fitting that such teachings should find an earthly habitation in a place of surpassing loveliness and grandeur?

THE HOLY SHRINE OF KOYASAN

Following closely along the eastern coast of Japan, where it bows out into the blue Pacific waters, there extends a long range of rather high hills. In a certain locality on the main island of Honshu, where the range passes through Wakayama Prefecture of Kii Province, it leaves behind one of its most favored peaks, a lavishly forested height of about 2,800 feet. It is the famed Mount Koya.

This peak, and a considerable area of land surrounding it, was given by the Emperor Saga to Kobo Daishi in the year 816. The latter had come upon the place during his wanderings through the country and had marked it as well suited for spiritual meditation and discipline by reason of its remoteness from human communities. More particularly, it was a good distance from the capital city, with its schemings and intrigues. In the earlier days of Japan's modernization a railway penetrated into the valley of the Kinokawa, making the retreat more accessible to civilization.

Jiro Harada has called the Koyasan the greatest Buddhist monastery in Japan. To no place, probably, do pilgrims flock in greater numbers or with greater zeal. The name Koyasan refers both to the mountain and to the monastery situated on a broad plateau at its summit. The sacred precincts measure nearly twenty miles in circumference and cover twenty-four square miles, on which stand perhaps more than one hundred and thirty temples. During the more than one thousand years of its existence lightning and fire have destroyed many fine old temples together with uncounted priceless art treasures. Government expropriation in the last century has taken much land away.

The visitor who comes here by railroad gets off at a station called *Gokurakubashi,* or "Bridge of Paradise." The name, as his subsequent impressions will prove on the ascent up the pilgrim trail, is by no means ill-chosen. The mountain is covered with handsome evergreens: there are umbrella firs fifty to sixty feet high and there are the *koyamaki.* This is a species of cryptomeria said to be peculiar to the mountain; it has a pungent, resinous odor which is not only highly agreeable but very soothing to the tired wayfarer. Everywhere these towering, stately conifers cast soft, cool shadows that enhance the mysterious solemnity of the place. "The vast cathedral aisles of Koyasan," writes Eliza Scidmore, "are rivalled only by the majestic avenues and Druidic groves of cryptomeria at Nikko."

The summit of the monastery-mountain is surrounded by two rows of eight peaks each; thus the very landscape here is the emblem of the lotus chalice with its petals!

We cannot, unfortunately, linger to hear about all the numerous points of absorbing interest on this holy mountain: the *Kondo,* or Golden Hall; the Hall of a Thousand Lamps; the great cemetery where Kobo Daishi himself lies buried; and many others. Let us listen to the vivid word-picture of a warm admirer of the Koyasan, T. P. Terry: "The most beautiful season is perhaps April or May; then the wild and broken slopes and forest dingles seem to tremble with electric joy at their spring awakening, and the mountain cherry blossoms, the azaleas and other wild flowers give the world an inkling of what the summer glory is to be."

But the other seasons have their beauty too, for: "In the full blaze of summer the languorous forest is exquisitely lovely, all color and brilliancy, and vocal

with the stridulous calling of a myriad cicadas. Stately ferns and a host of flowering shrubs decorate the winding courses of the hurrying, whimpering streams; the rocky gorges are fragrant with the perfume of countless white lilies and violets: the little-trodden, primeval by-paths are the haunts of many unhunted wild creatures, and the plashing of innumerable waterfalls and cascades ring through the glades . . . . In the autumn, after the crops are garnered, and white-clad pilgrims with jangling staffs are again on the move; when the maples, the *icho* trees, the vegetable wax, and a host of other turn-coat picaroons are flushing and paling before the advance guards of winter, the forest is lovely beyond description; but it is apt to be cold at the summit . . . . The traveler misses much who does not see the fine old temples of Koyasan on a gray winter morning beneath their thick coating of hoar frost or snow, or when they loom out of their great shadows on a frosty winter night, beneath a steel blue sky powdered with glittering stars."

Now, what of the religious life in the monastery? The monk is consirered to have taken a step toward becoming *bodhisattva.* He takes the following pledge:

> However innumerable sentient beings are,
> I vow to save them;
> However inexhaustible the passions are,
> I vow to extinguish them;
> However innumerable the dharmas are,
> I vow to study them;
> However incomparable the Buddha-Truth is,
> I vow to attain it.

The monk's life includes fastings, vigils, various types of ritual and different forms of meditation. The diet is strictly vegetarian and all visitors are expected to conform to it.

The East is by no means so unchanging as the popular stereotype would have us believe. Since the Reformation women are permitted onto the sacred mountain and they are now the most numerous and zealous visitors. Very recently they have gained permission to study here, for the Koyasan supports several institutions of learning.

Kobo Daishi rests under his tomb here in the famed cemetery, not dead, but, as the devout believe, absorbed in blissful contemplation of the Divine. In the last days, in the times of exceeding wickedness, as Buddhists hold, the Buddha Maitreya will manifest himself on earth to save an errant humanity from utter doom. Hereupon the great Japanese artist-saint will rise from his meditation to second the labors of Maitreya and preach to the whole world his inspiring gospel of harmony and beauty.

Has Shingon actually any message for the West? The usual objection is that its teachings are only a form of pantheism, and therefore ethically unsatisfactory. Nature, we are told, though appealing in some aspects, is exterior to man, impersonal, ruthless, cold. But if we are to believe that love, real love, is more than mere ethics, then Shingon's deep regard for nature has something to teach us. Let us listen to some of our greatest poets, for poets are among the wisest and clearest-visioned of all mortals:

> Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous,
> God hath written in those stars above;
> But not less in the bright flowerets under us
> Stands the revelation of his love.
>
> —*Longfellow*

> Heaven's ebon vault,
> Studded with stars unutterably bright,
> Through which the moon's unclouded grandeur rolls,
> Seems like a canopy which Love has spread
> To curtain her sleeping world. —*Shelley*

Dante closed his *Divine Comedy* by hailing: "The Love that moveth the sun and the other stars." It appears, then that the beauty of nature, viewed profoundly and reverently, can disclose the workings of a love that is cosmic in scope!

Must the great Holy Ones of India and of Palestine and their teachings ever seem to stand in opposition to one another? The Japanese have a saying: *Shaka hasa no hana, Christo lili, tengaku onaji.* "For Buddha the lotus, for Christ the lily, and the same heaven for them. both."

We are by nature merciful, reluctant to give pain to any one.
We desire your well-being as well as of others,
Even as we wish the good of ourselves.
Abstention from injury to all creatures
In thought, word and deed,
Kindness and gift are the permanent duties of the good.
All acts that are done without injuring any creature
Become serviceable to the doer both here and hereafter.
Those facts that involve injury to others, destroy faith.
And faith being destroyed, involves the destroyer in ruin.
One should abstain from all acts that are fraught
With injury or malice,
And seek to acquire a knowledge of the soul.
Whether in need of food and of the necessities of life
Or transcending such need,
One should be of virtuous disposition.
Always look upon all creatures as one's own self.
Abstain totally from inflicting any kind of injury.

—Hindu Wisdom

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

Winter began at the Ananda Ashrama with the celebration of Holy Mother's birthday anniversary which this year fell on December 23rd and was observed at the Ashrama on the 22nd with special worship and offerings. On December 23rd Srimati Gayatri Devi spoke on *If Christ Came Today*. Christmas Eve followed in quick succession with its traditional worship centered around the altar of the Mother and Child in a spirit of joyous exhuberance. Singing of carols, reading of the story of the Nativity, and an address, constituted the whole of the Service.

The New Year's Eve Service, in the hush hour of midnight, brought many devout worshippers together in the peace of the Temple. Srimati Gayatri Devi spoke on *A Year of Faith* and in conclusion led a candle-lighting ceremony in which the entire congregation participated. In prayerful attitude each one lit a candle from a master candle that had been burning at the foot of the altar and walked out through the wide entrance of the Temple to greet one another with a "Happy New Year."

Swami Vivekananda was remembered on his natal day, January 22nd, in a private observance of meditation and devotion by the Ashrama community and visiting friends. The public celebration of his birthday took place on February 3rd when Swami Paramananda too received loving tribute in commemoration of his birthday jointly with that of his Guru. Srimati Gayatri Devi's theme for the Sunday Service was *Man of God*. Brahmachari Nachiketa also addressed the congregation in a parting message of love and goodwill before

returning to India three days later. An Indian dinner, served to a large number, was the characteristic expression of the festive day.

Sri Ramakrishna's birthday festival on March 3rd was similar in nature and attended by many friends and devotees who came to the Service in his honor and remained for the Hindu luncheon afterwards.

The two outside lectures of the season were given on March 6th and 8th by Srimati Gayatri Devi, one before the La Crescenta Women's Club and the other at the home of Eleanor Hay in Pasadena. The subjects were respectively, *India and Vedanta* and *Yoga in Practice.*

On Sunday March 10th Ashrama's Sunday School was inaugurated. It is held at eleven o'clock and will be a regular part of Sunday's activities.

VEDANTA CENTRE, COHASSET AND BOSTON, MASS.

In spite of the leader's continuous absence from the eastern headquarters, the work of the Vedanta Centre has been kept alive. Each Sunday morning and Wednesday evening the faithful group has met in the Boston Chapel and listened to the Service conducted by the appointed members, who have done their part in humility and helpfulness to one another. Throughout the winter the sanctuary-home in Cohasset has been the meeting place over and over again for the devotees who have gone there to attend the daily Services and to enjoy spiritual comradeship. Beginning with Christmas and New Year's Eve and ending with Sri Ramakrishna's birthday, each of the season's festivals has been observed in the Centre's traditional manner.

News has been received that Sri Nachiketa who conducted the Centre's Services in Gayatri Devi's absence until January has arrived safely in India.